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Message Text

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11
ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-02 /088 W
---------- 124488
R 151640Z JAN 76
FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4955
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
RUEHDTJJUSMISSION USUN NY 325
USCINCEUR
CINCUSNAVEUR
FOSIF ROTA
COMSIXTHFLT

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 0089

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR PDEV MR SS
SUBJECT: SAHARA WATCH: MAURITANIA ESTABLISHES PRESENCE IN DAKHLA

REF: NOUAKCHOTT 0070

SUMMARY: SPANISH AUTHORITIES HAVE REPORTEDLY TURNED OVER AD-
MINISTRATION OF DAKHLA TO MAURITANIANS, WHO ARE IN PROCESS OF
ESTABLISHING ADMINISTRATIVE APPARATUS IN CITY. EMBASSY
CONTINUES TO HEAR OCCASIONAL REPORTS OF DISSATISFACTION BY
MAURITANIANS WITH GIRM SAHARA POLICY. END SUMMARY.

1. SPANISHREPORTEDLY TRANSFERRED ADMINISTRATION OF DAKHLA
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(VILLA CISNEROS) TO MAURITANIA ON JANUARY 13. PICTURE ON

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FRONT PAGE OF JANUARY 15 PARTY PAPER CHAAB SHOWS SPANISH
AND MAURITANIAN AUTHORITIES SITTING ACROSS TABLE FRON
EACH OTHER. CAPTION READS "TRANSFER OF DAKHLA ADMINIS-
TRATION TO MAURITANIA". ACCOMPANYING FEATURE STORY
REPORTS THAT MAURITANIAN PRESENCE IS BEING QUICKLY ES-
TABLISHED IN DAKHLA. (THERE IS NO MENTION OF MOROCCANS
IN ARTICLE NOR HAS THERE BEEN ANY OTHER REFERENCE TO
THEM IN MAURITANIAN PRESS REPORTS ON TAKEOVER OF
DAKHLA.) ARTICLE REITERATES NOW STANDARD AFFERTION THAT
MAURITANIANS WERE WARMLY WELCOMED BY LOCAL POPULATION. FEATURE
NOTED THAT DAKHLA IS CITY OF ABOUT 5,000 PERSONS "WHERE ONE CAN
SEE EVERYTHING THAT CHARACTERIZES A MAURITANIAN CITY".
STORY CONCLUDES WITH DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PUBLIC
SERVICES IN DAKHLA, POINTING OUT THAT LOCAL INHABITANTSR
WILL CONTINUE TO OPERATE MOST OF SERVICES. IT WAS
REPORTED, HOWEVER, THAT ABOUT DOZEN MAURITANIANS ARE
NOW INVOLVED IN RUNNING POSTS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS. IN ADDI-
TION, MAURITANIA'S INDUSTRIAL HOLDING COMPANY, SNIM, IS
PREPARING TO TAKE OVER FROM TWO SPANISH COMPANIES DIFPA
TRIBUTION IN DAKHLA OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS.

2. EMBASSY HAS HAD RECENT CONFIRMATION OF SEVERAL GIRM
EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH ADMINISTRATIVE PRESENCE IN
DAKHLA.
CIVIL AVIATION OFFICIAL REPORTS THAT TRANSPORT MINISTRY
IS IN PROCESS OF SENDING MAURITANIAN PERSONNEL TO OPERATE
ALL ASPECTS OF DAKHLA AIRPORT. TWO MAURITANIAN AIR
TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS ON TRAINING IN UK MAY BE PULLED
OUT WITHIN NEXT SEVERAL DAYS SO THEY CAN BE POSTED AT
DAKHLA. MISSION OFFICER RECENTLY OVERHEARD DIRECTOR
OFTTSECNA (ORGANIZATION SIMILAR TO OUR FEDERAL AVIA-
TION ADMINISTRATION) SAY THAT HIS AGENCY IS PREPARING
TO SET UP OFFICE IN DAKHLA TODAY. DIRECTOR WAS
HEARD TO SAY THAT TIME IS OF ESSENCE IN ORDER PREVENT MOROCCANS
FROM EXPLOITING SITUATION. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION
FROM EMBASSY OFFICER, SECRETARY GENERAL IN MINISTRY
OF JUSTICE SAID THAT ALTHOUGH MINISTRY HAS NOT YET
DRAWN UP PLANS TO ESTABLISH JUDICIAL PRESENCE IN
SAHARA, HE EXPECTS THESE RPOPOSALS WILL BE DRAFTED
SOON.
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3. EMBASSY CONTINUES TOHEAR OCCASIONAL REPORTS OF
MAURITANIAN DISENCHANTMENT WITH GIRM'S SAHARA POLICY.
TWO PRIMARY CONCERNS ARE: (A) SAHARAN EFFORT IS DE-
TRACTING SUBSTANTIALLY FROM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN
MAURITANIA. THIS CRITICISM HAS BEEN MADE VERY EX-
PLICITLY TO EMBASSY OFFICER, EITHER DIRECTLY OR THROUGH
THIRD PARTY, BY OFFICIAL IN OFFICE OF TOURISM AND ANO-

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THER IN BUREAU OF COMMERCE. ONE OF CRITICS CONCLUDED CONVERSATION BY COMMENTING THAT HE "USED TO THINK PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH WAS A SMART MAN". ONE OFFICIAL IS MOORISH AND OTHER IS AFRICAN. (B) AFRICAN ELEMENT OF POPULATION HAS NEVER BEEN ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT SAHARAN ADVENTURE, PARTICULARLY IF AFRICANS MUST PAY THE PRICE IN BATTLE. MOST RECENT EVIDENCE COMES FROM REPORT BY EXPATRIATE CONTRACT EMPLOYEE RESIDING IN SELIBABY (ACROSS RIVER FROM SENEGAL) WHO IS IN DIRECT DAILY CONTACT WITH BLACK MAURITANIAN POPULATION. LOCAL RADIO ANNOUNCEMENTS HAVE BEEN SUGGESTING THAT YOUNG MAURITANVANS MAY BE DRAFTED IN SUPPORT OF WAR EFFORT. DRAFT-AGE YOUNG MEN IN SELIBABY AREA SAY THEY WILL DEPART IMMEDIATELY FOR SENEGAL IF THIS RUMOR PROVES TO BE TRUE. ANOTHER CONFIRMATION OF DISENCHANTMENT WAS RECENTLY EXPRESSED TO EMBASSY OFFICER BY WELL-INFORMED MOORISH BUSINESSMAN WHO HAS RELATIVES IN SAHARA. ALTHOUGH UNWILLING TO EXPRESS PERSONAL OPINION ON SAHARAN POLICY, HE ALLOWED AS HOW THERE IS CONSIDER-ABLE OPPOSITIOTO SAHARAN TAKEOVER. HE THOUGHT, OVER COURSE OF TIME, SAHARANS MIGHT BE ABLE TO ADJUST TO MAURITANIAN SUZERAINTY BUT SERIOUSLY QUESTIONED WHE-THER SAHARANS WOULD EVER WILLINGLY ACCEPT MOROCCAN CONTROL. HE CONCLUDED DISCUSSION BY SUGGESTING THAT MAURITANIA AND MOROCCO ARE LIKELY TO FACE LONG GUER-RILLA STRUGGLE AND COMPARED SITUATION TO PROBLEM CON-FRONTING ETHIOPIA IN ERITREA.HANDYSIDE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, TERRITORIAL CLAIMS, NATIONAL UNIFICATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976NOUAKC00089
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760016-1177
From: NOUAKCHOTT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760154/aaaabvth.tel
Line Count: 142
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 NOUAKCHOTT 70
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <25 MAR 2004 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <03 AUG 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

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Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SAHARA WATCH: MAURITANIA ESTABLISHES PRESENCE IN DAKHLA
TAGS: PBOR, PDEV, MR, SS, (OULD CHEIKH, ABDALLAHI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006